

## TURKEYS.

BY W. J. BELL, ANGUS.

**D**URING the past year I have met a great many who assert that they are unable to sell their large turkeys at the same price as small ones. I must admit that turkeys weighing from ten to fourteen pounds are in more demand at present for the Canadian market than ones weighing from sixteen to twenty pounds. But let me ask you, is this the market breeders should cater to? I say emphatically, "No," for it is impossible for this market to use the large number of turkeys now raised in Canada. The market you should aim to please is the English market, which is in no danger of being overstocked, and that market demands the heaviest turkeys you can produce. It is possible, with the best stock to start with and good care while growing, to have bronze turkeys weighing, cockerels twenty to twenty-five pounds, and pullets thirteen to sixteen pounds at December first, the same being hatched the previous June. That is the time they will have to be sold to reach England in good time for the Christmas demand, and the price has not been lower than seven cents per pound in any section that I know of. Take nineteen pounds as an average of the large ones at seven cents per pound, and twelve pounds as an average of small ones at nine cents per pound, and you will find a difference in favor of the former and with the advantage of being marketed a full month earlier. The extra food fed during this month, if distributed carefully among the flock while growing would cause them to reach the weights mentioned by December first, as up to this date they have very little cold weather to contend against; and always provided you start with a strain known to reach good weights. Feed your breeders sparingly from the middle of March and set their eggs under turkeys, dusting the hen well with insect powder when doing so. Also give the hen another dusting two or three days before the poults hatch. Leave them in the nest twenty-four hours after hatching, and then remove to a large box—the larger the better. Place the hen and her young in this, and cover on top with loose boards. I only open the boards while feeding to give them light to eat, and not enough to let the hen fly out. I keep them here just one day unless it is a very cold time, when I may leave them an extra day. My idea for taking them to this box is to teach them to eat out of my hand—a very important point

in my estimation, for I feed them entirely up to five months of age their soft food out of my hands, and there is never any left to sour on the ground. After I take them out of the box I place the hen in a coop with no bottom and lath front for the poults to run in and out of at will, and I move this coop the breadth of itself every day at noon when the ground is warmed with the noonday sun, and I keep the grass eaten closely where I have the flock. Sheep are the best to crop it down and they never tramp a turkey poult. I have a fence near the coop for the young to run under when they get the warning cry from the old one, and a scare-crow standing close to coop until the poults are about five weeks old. A place for them to dust in is a necessity.

Regarding food, I may say that I have noticed so many successful breeders of turkeys each advocating a different food that I have come to the conclusion that the kind of food is not so important as their getting it often and regularly. While in the box I feed mine nearly every hour, commencing with bread soaked in milk, and start towards night to add a little shorts or middlings. When placed in coop I feed five times per day, and gradually drop out the bread from their ration and make it all shorts mixed with milk, sweet or sour, and cut up onions or dandelion in it twice per day. This is their food until five weeks old. They have nearly all the milk they will drink, and a creek runs near their coop giving them plenty of water and always fresh. Be careful and do not let any salt enter their food, or you will have the pleasure (?) of burying all who get it. After five weeks of age the hen is given her liberty and all are allowed to roam over the farm at will. They are fed shorts in the morning and good clean wheat at night, but when grasshoppers are plentiful they often refuse the wheat. Give them all the wheat, oats and peas they will eat during October and November, together with their morning feed of shorts, and I feel sure you will have them the weights mentioned at the beginning of this article. As a great many breeders advocate letting the hen have full liberty from the start, I would say that my idea for putting her in coop is to prevent her taking the young into long wet grass in the early morning, or being caught out in rain, wet being fatal to the poults; and I think the poults will roam as much as is good for them until five weeks old without the hen. Have a broad board to cover the lath front of coop each night to save them from cats, etc. The important points I believe are.—1. Start with a large strain. 2. Dusting with insect powder, and dust bath for young. 3. Feeding out of the hand. 4. Moving coop every day.